

PENTECOST SUNDAY 2021

Today the Church celebrates Pentecost Sunday a day on which the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles who were gathered in the upper room praying with the Blessed Virgin Mary. On this day, we are called to put to use the gifts we have been given by God to build the Church the body of Christ. The feast of Pentecost is celebrated on the 50th day after Easter which also marks the end of the Easter season on the liturgical calendar and the beginning of Ordinary time.

With the apostles' preaching, thousands were baptized that day and the Church was born in the presence of Christ's own mother and countless other witnesses. At Pentecost, the frightened group of apostles were transformed into great preachers by a special anointing of the Holy Spirit and the confused body of Jesus' other followers was thus transformed into a single body of Christian witnesses called the Church.

Pentecost is a day of renewal and empowerment. At the first Pentecost the audience experienced a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit with the gift of tongues, hearing Peter speaking to them in their native languages. What sin had split at the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11) was re-united by the Holy Sp. at Pentecost.

After Pentecost the early Christians thus became powerful witnesses and brave martyrs for the faith. From this we see how the Holy Spirit warms us up and empowers us to go out there to witness to Christ and make a difference in the world. We are to remind all people that God is their Father and our Father; that despite all the visible differences of language, culture, color or even social status, we are all one family and should therefore live as brothers and sisters.

As an indwelling God, the Holy Spirit makes us His Living Temples strengthening us in our fight against temptations and in our mission of bearing witness to Christ by our transparent Christian lives. As a sanctifying God, He makes us holy through the sacraments: for example, we become a) children of God and heirs of heaven through Baptism; b) warriors and defenders of the faith, through Confirmation; c) reconciled to God and others through Penance and we receive spiritual nourishment through the Holy Eucharist which comes to us as a result of transubstantiation effected by the Holy Spirit.

As the Spirit comes, He brings us His gifts, (wisdom, counsel, fortitude, understanding, knowledge, piety, fear of the Lord); fruits and charisms. So, we need to consider using the diversity of those gifts to bring life to our parish community; those at the fore front and those in the background. Do not just sit back and become Church pew fillers but put to use the charisms given to you by the Holy Spirit and share them with fellow parishioners.

Pentecost is about believing that the power of the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon each of us. We are called to play a more active role in the Parish community. Pentecost is a call to service, a call to action. The Spirit we received at confirmation is not a Spirit of timidity. We are called upon to do our part in building the body of Christ, the Church and spreading God's kingdom here on earth.

So as Christians, we must remember that what began at Pentecost was left for all of us gathered here to complete. We have to preach the gospel and support missionary work in every way possible. What we profess on Sunday, we must practice during the rest of the week.

Pentecost is not just for one day, so let us pray for the daily anointing by the Holy Spirit so that we may fight against our temptations; control our evil tendencies and be able stand out as strong soldiers of Christ ready to defend and preach the gospel to all people through our words and actions. Amen.